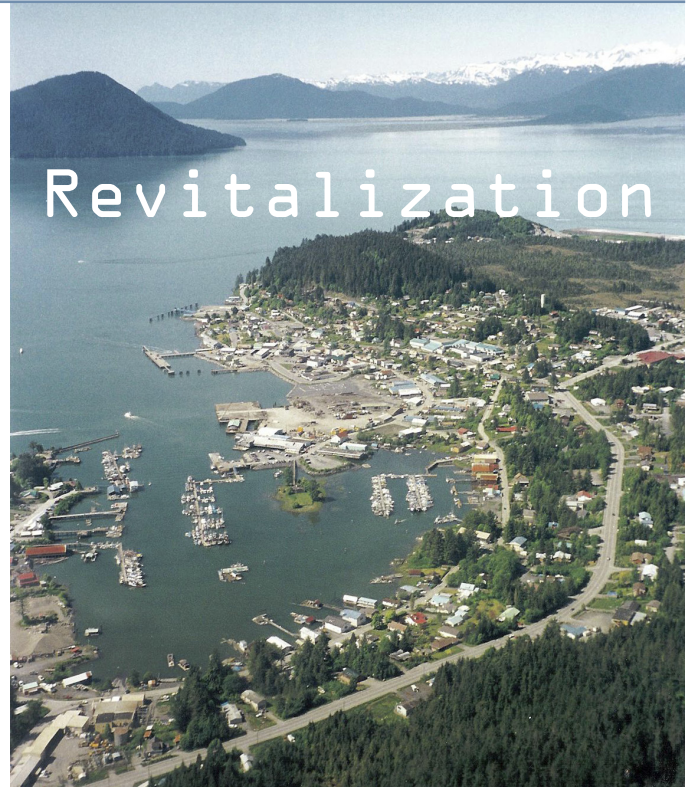

Wrangell Downtown Revitalization

Final Report

*creating a liveable, healthy downtown
supported by and consistent with
the community's vision, values, and identity*



October 2006



*Jones & Jones Architects and Landscape Architects, Ltd.
Seattle, Washington*

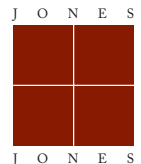


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Executive Summary

The Wrangell Downtown Revitalization Concept Plan is the realization of the far-sighted goal of the City of Wrangell to leverage planned infrastructure improvements along Front and Shakes Streets to develop a unified community vision for downtown Wrangell. This concept plan focuses on Front Street as a “community room,” incorporating pedestrian-friendly safety improvements, site furnishing, wayfinding and interpretive features to the downtown that will result in a space that people will find comfortable and safe and most of all will be enjoyed and treasured by residents and visitors alike as the heart of a real, working Southeast Alaska community.

This plan is not a product, rather it is the record of the process by which the Design Team engaged the community on behalf of the City of Wrangell to give form to the Wrangell that they love, want to live in, and leave to their children.

This plan was produced in part with Mini-Grant Assistance funds made available through the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, and the Denali Commission.

Overview



The Study's Beginnings

The City of Wrangell had undertaken significant community discussion and in 2000, together with consultant Hyatt Palma, developed the Downtown Wrangell Economic Enhancement Strategy (EES). Prior to the Wrangell Downtown Revitalization Concept Plan, the Wrangell Economic Development Committee had revisited the EES to review what has been accomplished and what still needed to happen to realize the plan. Progress had been made in a number of areas by both individual businesses implementing improvements such as installing new benches, and the half-dozen public agencies and organizations working on signage, facilities improvements, storefront vacancies, infrastructure, business development, historic issues, and links between cultural and historic resources and Wrangell's business district.

Although the EES did include significant resident and local business owner input as the basis for their recommendations, it lacked support from a few key business owners and did not provide a clear vision of the community's desired future.

The design team led by Jones & Jones was hired to develop a conceptual plan that enjoys broad community support, gives visual form to the recommendations in the Economic Enhancement Strategy, integrates the various efforts currently underway into a unified vision, allows the needed infrastructure improvements to proceed, becomes the basis for a community Master Plan, and provides Wrangell with an honest working, walkable Front Street and downtown district for both its residents and its visitors.



Study Team

Jones & Jones teamed with Jensen Yorba Lott and the McDowell Group, two Juneau firms that, like Jones & Jones, are known quantities who have a proven track record working for the City of Wrangell. Jones & Jones led the overall urban design effort, integrating the diverse uses, elements and needs into a unified design. Jensen Yorba Lott focused on guiding the design work and implementation plan to fit smoothly within the existing historic character, environmental conditions, and construction limitations of Wrangell in particular and southeast Alaska in general.

The McDowell Group developed a deep understanding of local and regional population and economic trends to forecast and identify the potential economic benefits to be gained from this project. Their analysis informs the implementation strategy to allow the City of Wrangell to maximize the returns on the investment required for the revitalization of downtown Wrangell.

Our team's focus on public participation and working in the community was essential as funding for potential future projects will need to have strong community understanding and support.

Stakeholder Participants

Client Design Team Meeting

Attendees: Greg Meissner *Harbor Department*, Jim Nelson *Electric Department*, Carol Rushmore *Economic Development*, Bob Caldwell *Public Works*, Bob Prunella *City of Wrangell*, Terri Henson *Electric Department*, Marcy Garrison *Nolan Center*

Wrangell Chamber of Commerce Meeting

Attendees: LeAnn Rinehart *Jitterbugs Expresso*, Gene White *Chamber Board*, Tis Peterman *Chamber of Commerce*, Carol Rushmore *City of Wrangell*, Beckey Rooney *Chamber of Commerce*, Fred Angerman *Chamber of Commerce*, Janell Privett *Chamber of Commerce*

Economic Development Committee Meeting

Attendees: Grover Mathis *Parks and Recreation*, Betty Keegan *Wrangell Medical Center*, Augie Schultz *Tlingit Haida Regional Housing Authority*, Julie Decker *Wrangell Chamber of Commerce*, Bill Privett, *Business Owner*

Wrangell Convention and Visitors Bureau

Attendees: Denise Wolvin *Wrangell Convention and Visitors Bureau*, Carol Rushmore *City of Wrangell*, Dawn Angerman *Wrangell Convention and Visitors Bureau*



The Public

Three public meetings were conducted as part of the Wrangell Downtown Revitalization Concept Plan process. In order to maximize participation, the meetings were advertised in the *Wrangell Sentinel* and through a series of Public Service Announcements on Stikine River Radio (KSTK 101.7 FM) prior to each public meeting. Turnout ranged from approximately 31 to 45 community members at each of the meetings.

Stakeholder Meetings

Four stakeholder meetings were held as part of the Wrangell Downtown Revitalization Concept Plan process. Representing a broad spectrum of interests, the different groups consistently identified common concerns which are reflected in the July Workshop Findings.

Public Meetings

Three public meetings were held as part of the Wrangell Downtown Revitalization Concept Plan process. Representing a broad spectrum of interests, the different groups consistently identified common concerns which are reflected in the July Workshop Findings.

The public meetings were organized in a workshop format. The workshop format is predicated on an participatory iterative process, where attendees are required to participate and contribute to the discussion. The input from each group is recorded to inform the ideas and issues discussed with each following group.

The Process

The planning and design process for the Wrangell Downtown Revitalization Conceptual Designs consisted of the following three phases:

Fact Finding

This is the initial phase when existing conditions, reports, data, and observation is done to get a complete a picture as possible of the project. This phase culminated in the initial Public Forum/ Workshop, which was held to present the design team findings, review and receive input on the existing recommendations, the success of current efforts, discuss issues, and chart next steps. The result of this phase are the July workshop findings and the opportunities and constraints diagram.

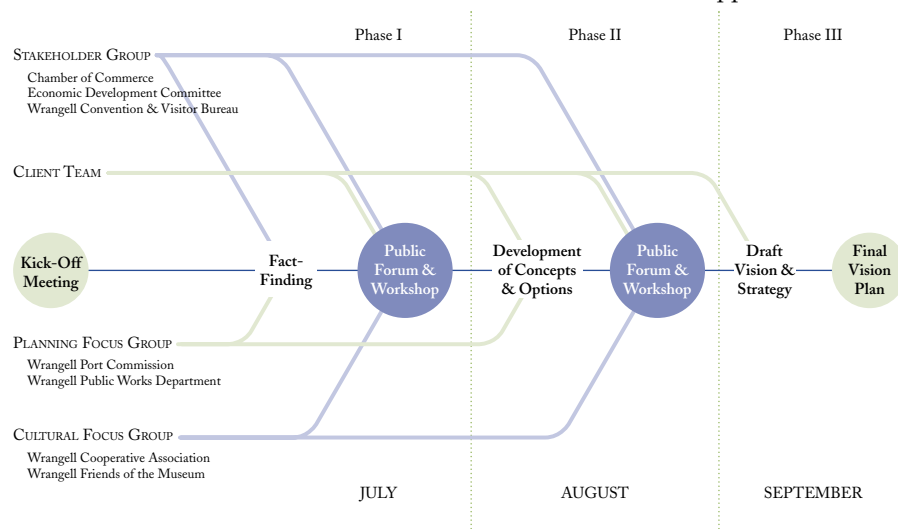
Development of Concepts and Options

This phase builds on the previous phase, in particular the feedback and input from the Stakeholder meetings and Public Workshop. This was used to develop a draft concept plan and identify options to develop further into the Vision plan. This phase culminated in the Review Workshop, which focused on the presentation, review and discussion of the draft visual concept plan, proposed options and implementation strategies.

Draft Vision and Strategy

Phase three consisted of refining the Draft Vision and Presentation of the Final Vision to the Client Team and others. The draft was refined based on the input from the Review Workshop and input from additional meetings and interviews prior to the presentation of the Final Vision Concept in October. The Final Vision Concept is part of this Final Report, where it is included with recommendations for future steps and the Economic and Visitor Analysis.

PARTICIPATORY PLANNING PROCESS



Findings & Options



*Incorporate the natural beauty
of Wrangell into downtown
— such as Marble Island,
Petroglyph Beach, and garnets*

July Workshop Findings

This is a summary of the Findings Workshop and Options Presentation conducted by the design team to support the Wrangell Downtown Revitalization Concept Plan. For the full report, please refer to the Appendices.

Sidewalks and streets

Currently sidewalks are uneven and tripping hazards at times. In some places they are too narrow and are not wheelchair/stroller friendly. Sidewalks are not full on both sides of the street. Some would like sidewalks to Petroglyph beach, to the Cruise Ship Dock, along the waterfront, and a better walkway to Chief Shakes Island. Covering sidewalks to make them more user friendly in the rain was commonly mentioned. Streets are deteriorating and need replacement.

Parking and traffic

Parking is disorganized and at times dangerous. Disallow parking all the way to intersections. Parking in front of the City Market grocery store is dangerous, as cars back blindly into traffic. Everyone pointed to a parking problem but also noted that part of the problem is no one will walk through town for their downtown needs.

Residents currently drive between the grocery stores, Ottesen's, the post office, and the bank. Residents would like parking to be maximized, but cleaned up.

Suggestions were made to purchase lots in the downtown area to create more parking lots.

Traffic is also disorganized and dangerous at times. Congestion between the grocery stores, Ottesen's, the post office, and the bank can be a problem for the reason listed above. On cruise ship days, work trucks cannot get in or out of container area on the waterfront. Access roads from residential areas onto Front Street can be a problem.

Clean up downtown

The container staging area on the waterfront should be paved to prevent mud and dust. The area between downtown and Shakes Island feels "junky" and needs to be cleaned up. Buildings that have not been maintained give the town a depressing feel. Visitor entry areas need to be cleaned up. Utilities need to be buried.



... this is a project for Wrangell residents, and any benefits to visitors will be secondary.

Maintain “working town” feel

Beautify downtown

Planters, benches, better lighting, and trees downtown are desirable. However, as maintenance is an issue, adopt-a-planter/bench/tree programs were suggested. Also suggested were finding programs to paint old buildings and bring in more artwork to the downtown area.

Final Top Priorities of Group — Group members were asked at the end of the brainstorming session that if only one improvement could be made to downtown Wrangell, other than street and sidewalk improvements, what would they choose?

- Landscaping — six votes
- Improved/decorative lighting — three votes
- Site furnishings such as benches, trash cans, and bike racks — two votes
- Clean up downtown, paint buildings — one vote
- Figure out parking problems — one vote
- More restrooms — one vote
- Speakers — one vote

Closing Vision/Thoughts — Group members were asked at the end of the brainstorming session about their key desires for Wrangell.

- As a coastal community, Wrangell needs places for residents to sit, view, and enjoy the waterfront
- We want to be a more pedestrian-friendly community
- As a retirement community and visitor destination, Wrangell needs more places to sit/rest
- Incorporate the natural beauty of Wrangell into downtown — such as Marble Island, Petroglyph Beach, and garnets
- More Native and local artwork
- Maintain “working town” feel
- Reduce litter and clean up downtown
- More plants and benches downtown
- Working waterfront — incorporate recreational opportunities for residents
- Fisherman’s Terminal
- Welcoming, safe, user-friendly community
- Activities for families/kids
- Fix sidewalks and streets



Overview

Findings & Options

Recommendations

Opportunities and Constraints

KEY

Landmarks	
Vehicular Circulation	
Opportunity Areas	
Year-Round Activity Zone	
Nodes	
Potential/Existing Greenspace	
Visitor Gateways	
Pedestrian Path	



Draft Revitalization Plan

Options Overview

Based on the existing conditions, identified opportunities and constraints, and the physical layout of downtown Wrangell, a Draft Revitalization Plan was developed. The draft plan identified the key concepts of the Revitalization Plan, where they would occur, and arrange of options for how they could be applied within the project area. This phase culminated in the Review Workshop, which focused on the presentation, review, and discussion of the draft visual concept plan, proposed options, and implementation strategies.

Key Concepts

Anchor nodes

Primary nodes actual ends of Front Street, visitor gateways to the community, secondary node at Nolan Center, organize vehicle circulation, provide pedestrian areas, interpretive information, wayfinding, orientation.

Connecting nodes

Located at regular intervals along Front Street, provide pedestrian refuges including seating, landscaping and shelter, visual continuity, interpretation, and direction to places off of Front Street.



Pedestrian circulation

Improve existing sidewalks, add new sidewalks, crosswalks and paths, canopies on storefronts, connect nodes, wayfinding and orientation, ramps and bulb-outs.

Traffic and parking

Organize on-street parking with bulb-outs and striping, organize off-street parking at anchor nodes.

Streetscape

Identify year-round activity area; on Front Street, between Front Street and City Hall, or City Hall. Define pedestrian areas with pattern pavement, pavers, rolled curbs, traffic controls, seating

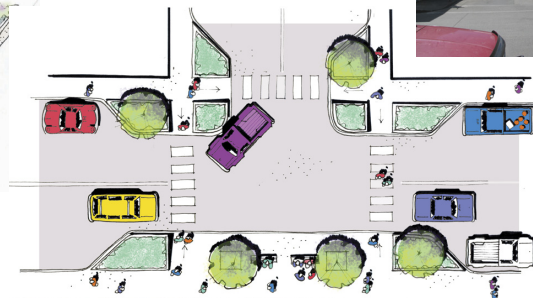
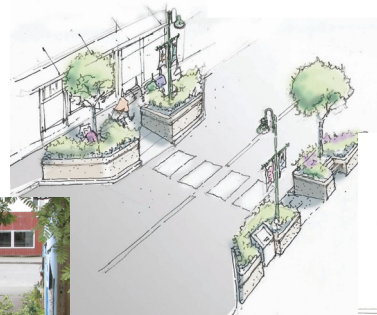
Character

Maintain and enhance distinct character of historic downtown with storefront guidelines, canopies. Maintain and enhance working character while providing pedestrian areas south of City Market, between City Pier, Nolan Center, and Totem Park.

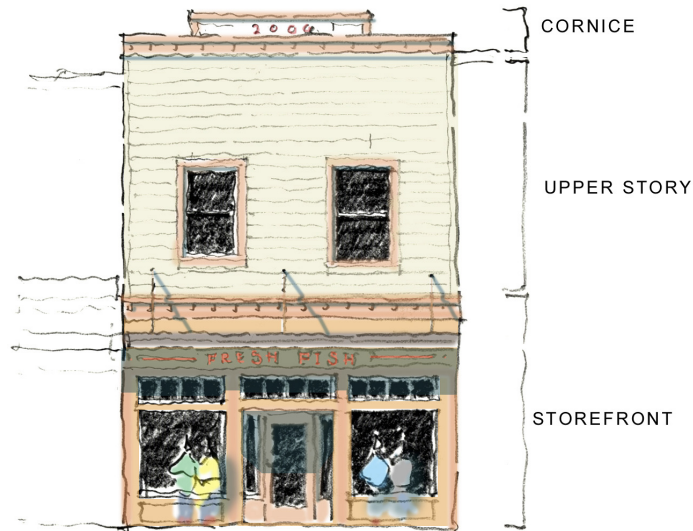


Example: McKinnon to City Market

Shown below are a range of options that were explored for this stretch of Front Street.



Example: McKimmon to City Market (Architectural Guidelines)



Example: McKinnon to City Market (Options)

Improved sidewalks, crosswalks, planters, and landscaping

Extend sidewalks along both sides of street

Improve pedestrian safety and visibility with bulb-outs at crosswalks and intersections

Organize on-street parking with striping and bulb-outs

Define entries and pave off-street parking areas



Recommendations

Revitalization Concept Plan

Based on the input from the Review Workshop and additional stakeholder input, the options were developed into recommendations and finalized in the Revitalization Concept Plan. The recommendations identify specific actions regarding sidewalks, curbs, paved surfaces, crosswalks, plantings, interpretive features, site furnishings, and new pedestrian pathways.

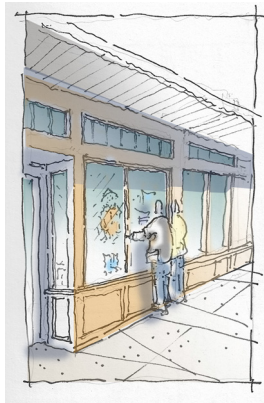
The Final Vision Concept is part of this Final Report, where it is included in the **Recommendations** section with the Architectural Guidelines, Next Steps, and the Economic and Visitor Analysis Summary. This Revitalization Vision Concept is the first phase of an ongoing process. Recommendations will be evaluated and revised as necessary in the next phase to develop buildable plans based on the vision concept.

Elements

- A. Curb and sidewalk bump outs at intersections and crosswalks in on-street parking areas
- B. Striped parking
- C. Rolled curbs to maintain all existing access to off-street parking while providing a level walking surface
- D. Façade improvements
- E. Paving and sidewalk surfaces
- F. Site Furnishings, pedestrian and bicyclist amenities



F



D



C



B



E



F



F



A

General Conditions for Entire Project

We recommend replacing all existing curbs with mountable or “rolled” curbs for two reasons: one is to maintain all existing accesses to driveways and off-street parking. Two is to eliminate all of the driveway ramps across the sidewalks, keeping the sidewalk surface continuously level.











Widen all sidewalks to eight feet (8') where possible to meet the standard minimum width for public ways (recommend 6' as a minimum width).

Corner-bump outs are recommended to physically prevent vehicles from parking within thirty feet (30') of intersection for vehicle and pedestrian visibility and safety. Please note that it is currently illegal to park in these spaces and bump-outs will prevent unsafe parking from occurring.

There are 61 legal parking spaces on Front Street; of these the proposed changes eliminate five (5) of the spaces, for a remaining total of 56 spaces on Front Street between City Pier and Campbell (Outer) Drive. South of Campbell Drive, the overall street width does not allow for on-street parking which is reflected by current curb striping and signage.

Goals

- Improve Front Street as a “community room”
- Enhance downtown character
- Organize pedestrian and vehicle use of space
- Extend and improve sidewalks for pedestrian safety and comfort
- Improve connectivity across and to Front Street
- Create a year-round pedestrian-friendly special use area

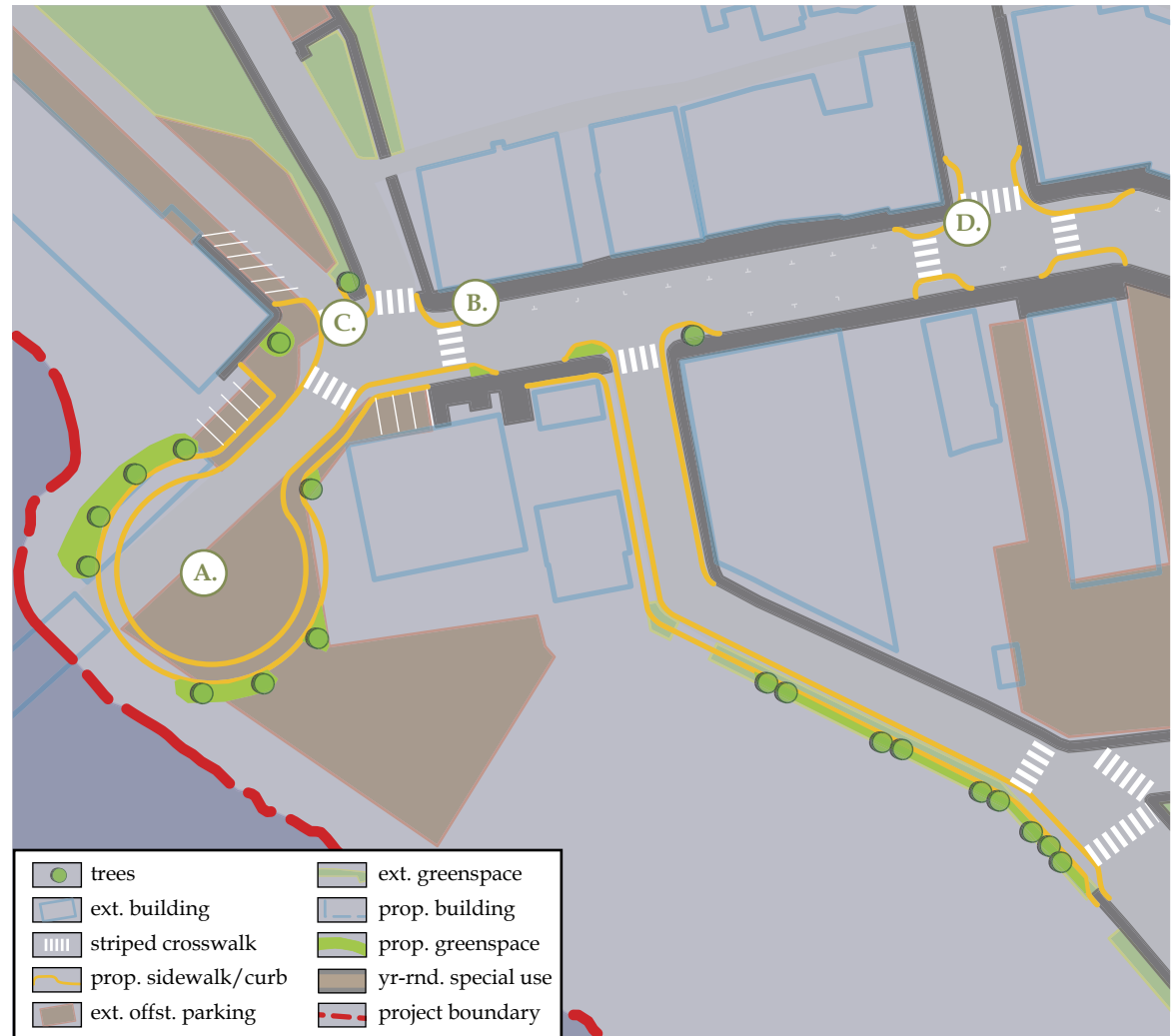
 trees	 ext. greenspace
 ext. building	 prop. building
 striped crosswalk	 prop. greenspace
 prop. sidewalk/curb	 yr-rnd. special use
 ext. offst. parking	 project boundary



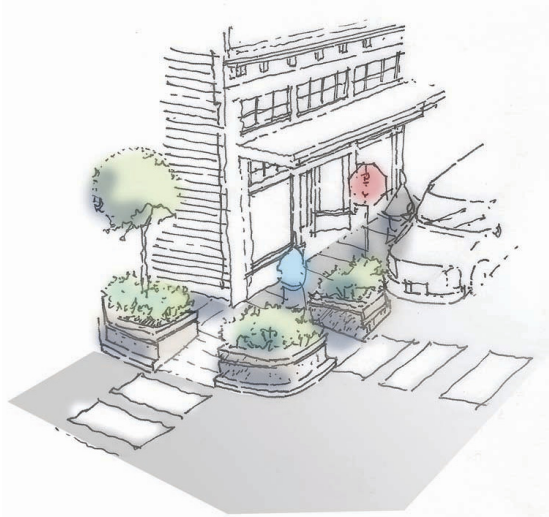
City Pier to McKinnon

- 50-foot-radius traffic turnaround and bus drop-off
- Defined ending for Front Street
- Controlled access to the City Pier
- Access to parking area behind Napa
- Medium-size gathering space for pedestrians outside of traffic areas corner in front of the Stikine Inn. Great views up Front Street and to Post Office
- Opportunity for public art such as a totem or wayfinding/interpretation/orientation elements, seating, and other amenities
- Widened sidewalk in front of NAPA
- Extend and widen sidewalks along Campbell (Outer) Drive
- Bump-outs at the intersection of McKinnon and Front Street
- Realignment of the pedestrian crossing across Front Street at McKinnon
- Potential extension of the bump out for pedestrians and temporary display space

Analysis of Segments and Recommendations



*A major community and visitor gateway
connecting Downtown, City Pier,
Post Office, Nolan Center*



B. Corner bump-out



C. View from gathering space



D. Architectural character

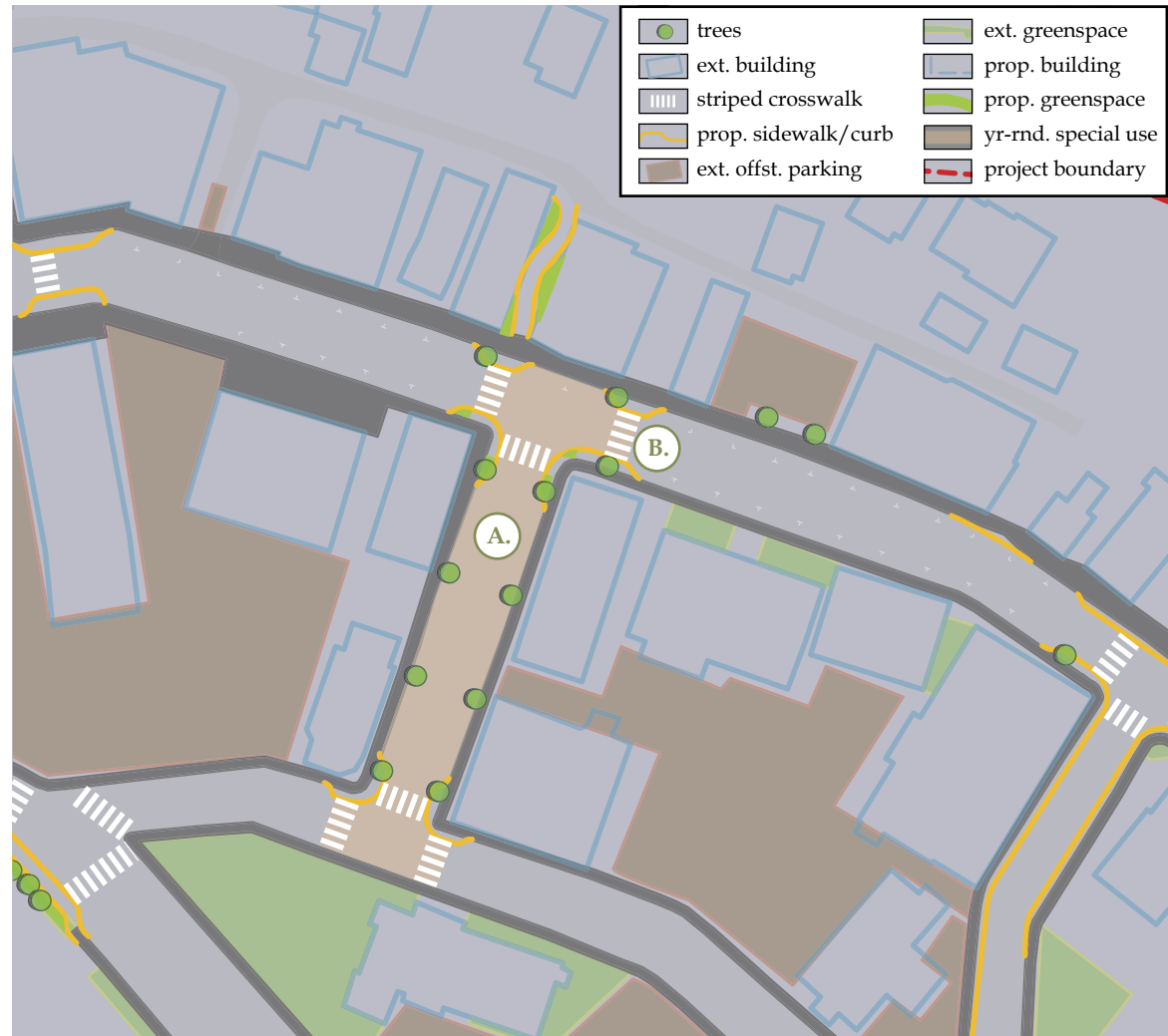


A. City Pier plaza/turnaround

McKinnon to Campbell

- Transform Lynch Street and the intersection of Lynch and Front Streets into a year-round special use area
- Distinct paving and curbs are minimal (3" max.)
- Area is intended to be pedestrian-friendly and can be partially or entirely closed off to vehicles for city events and festivals
- Close alley next to Stikine Drug (except to non-motorized vehicles and emergency vehicle access only)
- A multi-use path with planters to Cow Alley
- Vehicles access to Cow Alley via either Church Street or McKinnon Street.
- Corner bump-outs and widening of sidewalk opposite Campbell Drive
- Bump-out is extended in front of Diamond C café
- Sidewalks on Campbell Drive need to be widened to the eight-foot (8') minimum standard for public ways

Analysis of Segments and Recommendations



Heart of Front Street



Campbell to Episcopal

- Extend sidewalk along south side of Front Street from Campbell Drive to City Market
- Rolled curb will allow existing off-street parking access to remain while providing a consistently level walking surface
- Update seating area with new outdoor furnishings such as bench, trash can; also improve plantings and evaluate potential for interpretive opportunities (possibly historic churches in town (Church Street) or street names and histories (Native/Russian/British/American?))
- Also provide crosswalks across St. Michaels and Front Street
- Maintain existing access to parking lot next to store
- Stripe pull-in parking where there is adequate space between sidewalk and street traffic lanes
- Extend sidewalk and rolled curb from the end of existing sidewalk at Bay Industries to Case Street

Analysis of Segments and Recommendations





Seating example

Working SE Alaska community character



A. Totem Park



B. Front Street with SNO building (simulation)

Episcopal to Case

- Create new trail from end of Brueger Street within City right-of-way to the intersection of Front Street and Episcopal Avenue for improved pedestrian movement and connectivity between the Nolan Center and Museum and Totem Park
- Interpretive node at old mill to interpret timber heritage
- Node at Case Street intersection interpretation of points south
- End sidewalk on west side of street

Analysis of Segments and Recommendations



Connecting to heritage and history



A. Interpretation panel example



B. Future Old Mill Interpretive Node



Totem Trail concept



Historic photo of mill from far side of harbor

Case to Laundromat

- Create node on city storage property to improve visibility at corner
- Widen sidewalk on east side of street
- Place trees to break up impact of cold storage building
- Node on west side of street at intersection of Shakes Street and Case Avenue focusing on the adjacent/surrounding fishing economy. Cold storage, nets, pots, rigging, etc.

Analysis of Segments and Recommendations





Example of off-street node



A. View of intersection



Laundromat to Shakes Island

- Create formal end to Shakes Street with curb and sidewalks
- Widen sidewalk to 8' (eight feet)
- Sidewalk curves in front of parking lot
- Overlook and path provide a nice view of Shakes Island and harbor, can possibly tell Tlingit story
- Interpret Fort Dionysius
- Node and wayfinding at Shakes Pier
- Dedicated pedestrian path to the fishing pier and dock along edge of parking
- Path striped similar to a crosswalk on pier



Analysis of Segments and Recommendations





A. View of seafood processing



B. Interpretive node location



C. Maritime interpretation opportunity

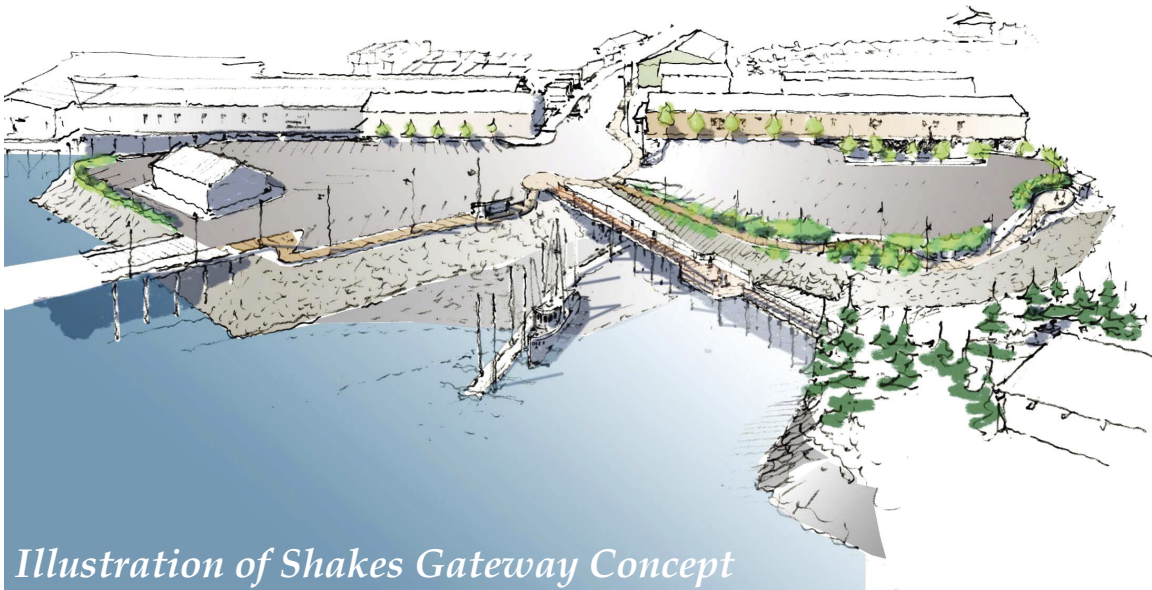


Illustration of Shakes Gateway Concept





Creating a Place

Downtown is a place people want to be.

This place represents the community's retail core or "Community Room."

Creates a "Sense of Place" but needs to be appropriate to the "scale" of community.

Architecture's Role in the Development of the Street

Downtown Wrangell is a place that people want to be, whether they are seasonal visitors or life-long residents. It is not only the opportunity to meet a friend and do your shopping that makes downtown Wrangell a destination; it is the historic architecture, the comfortable scale of the downtown, and the fact that downtown is the heart and soul of the community. By maintaining and enhancing the distinct downtown character by strengthening the architecture will aid in the revitalization of Wrangell's city center.

Building on What Exists – The Importance of Preservation

Much of Wrangell's historic architecture remains and the community pride can be seen in the numerous historic pictures of Wrangell's Front Street. These images show the vitality of the main street architecture of not too long ago. Many of these buildings remain; some are historically intact while others have been renovated and modified over the years. Some of these modifications are true to the original architecture, while many more have been developed with little consideration to the community's history or the needs of the visitors to the buildings. Beneath many of these building renovations lie the original building form and elements which can be restored to its past splendor.

Fortunately, what made Front Street desirable as a community destination and gathering place is still prevalent today; however, there is more we can do to bring back its potential as a revitalization centerpiece. First, we must understand, in architectural terms, what are the elements in a building fronting the street that creates a strong storefront that reflects Wrangell as a historic working community. We then must try to preserve those building elements that are appropriate for Wrangell, renovate, where possible, existing buildings that are lacking storefront characteristics, and provide design guidance to the design of new building to contribute to revitalization of the street. By modifying and restoring existing buildings and developing new buildings that respect the history of the community with strong storefront architecture we can revitalize the downtown and strengthen the pride of the community.



Community Room

Important visual resource or identifier for the community. A place that is collectively created by the architectural elements of each building along the edge of the room. The room is strengthened by gathering spaces, landscape, and pedestrian amenities.

Critical Elements

Pedestrian-scaled elements that create predictable rhythms; doors and windows that invite involvement; canopies or awnings that protect from the elements; lighting that provides a safe and welcoming environment; planters, benches, and places to stop to support socializing. People attract people.

The Community Room

The corridor along Front Street, including the street and sidewalks, should be thought of as a “community room” where the building’s facades and storefronts act as walls to the “room.” These facades create the community room or spaces for shopping, gathering, and celebrating and have a pleasant pedestrian scale that encourage people to spend time in the downtown. Additionally, many of the existing historical Wrangell buildings have been developed to be pedestrian-friendly storefronts that allow interaction between the pedestrians, the buildings, and the businesses within. This is a strong architectural feature found in the most successful downtowns that have supporting storefront architecture. Storefront architecture is comprised of the building façades with elements such as a welcoming storefront at the street level, upper stories for offices or housing, strong ornamental cornices that are consistent with adjacent buildings, covered canopies for pedestrian protection from the weather, simple signage, and appropriate lighting for both the building and pedestrian spaces. Understanding, promoting, and maintaining these storefront elements contribute to the strength of Front Street and are vital to a successful downtown and therefore a successful community.

Contributing to the City

The design of the street contributes to the overall image of the city. Well-designed architecture and streets create a successful downtown which in turn supports a successful community.



Photo 19. F. Matheson store and Pioneer Building on north end of Front Street, c.1908 looking east. Photo courtesy Wrangell Historical Society.

Historical Precedence

Recognize and appreciate Wrangell's architectural heritage.

Wrangell is fortunate to be a "working" community with good examples of its historic architecture still in place.

Build off of the past to strengthen the community by evaluating, deciding on course of action, rehabilitating, and enhancing buildings appropriately.

Wrangell's Architectural Heritage

The Elements of a Storefront

Individual facade design is still found in a number of the existing historical buildings along Front Street. Generally speaking, a building storefront elevation has three basic elements to its façade composition: the storefront, upper story, and cornice.

The lower portion or base of the building along the street is the storefront—the part of the building that interacts with the public along the street. Specific elements of this portion of the building respond to how we interact with the buildings. Typical elements are large storefront windows that open the use of the building to the public for a strong inside/outside connection, canopies or awnings that help protect the pedestrians from the rain, snow, or even sunshine. There are lighting and signage that identify the use of the building. There is also an obvious and easily identifiable recessed entry that invites in the public into the business. The Elks Lodge and Ottesen's Hardware represent a good identifiable entry.

Above the storefront portion of the building is the upper story. This portion of the building typically houses less-public aspects of the building's use. These programs are offices, storage, and private residences. The composition of the detail of the upper store share a relationship to the storefront base, however the detail is less ornate and meant to be related to the adjacent building as well. They are typically more private and therefore are expressed that way in the level of architectural detail. The Deihls Building is a good example of upper story design.

The third major element of a storefront's architecture is the cornice. This element is typically found at the top of the façade. Its intention is to finish the composition of the façade elements...to provide a formal "cap" to the building. It also is used to tie the facades of adjacent buildings together, sharing a similar strong horizontal datum with adjacent buildings. The Wrangell Insurance Company is a good example of a building with a strong cornice.



Photo 8. Greif/Stough Building south and east facades, March 1985. Photo by K. Cohen, courtesy Wrangell Historical Society.



Photo 10. Beihl/Neyman Building south and west facades, November 1985. Photo by P. Ockert, courtesy Wrangell Historical Society.

Throughout the storefront design is the appropriate use of quality material that maintains a commonality to adjacent buildings and has a high level of craftsmanship in its installation and expression. The use of appropriate color and expression is also use to express individual buildings and to create an exiting and vibrant street. Painted wood siding or composite wood and/or cement board siding that emulates wood is a good example of a material choice. If a composite material is more desirable in terms of long-term maintenance, cement board siding seems to work well emulating horizontal wood or even shakes. The key is to follow through with the finished detail.



Photo 20 F. Matheson store and totem pole c.1928. Photo courtesy T.T.Tabor Collection Alaska State Historical Library.

Development of Architectural Guidelines

Elements of a Façade

Cornice

Detail that “caps” the building front. Creates a strong roof line and gives a finished appearance to the building’s façade.

Upper Story

Simple proportions and materials, not to compete with the storefront, commonly represents office space, apartments, or storage. Provides a strong connection to the other buildings on the block.

Storefront

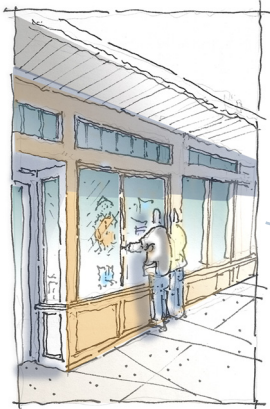
Represents the main commercial activity of the building. Main public interactive element of the building. Emphasis is on the windows and doorways that allow for interaction with the community.

Storefront Elements and Their Importance

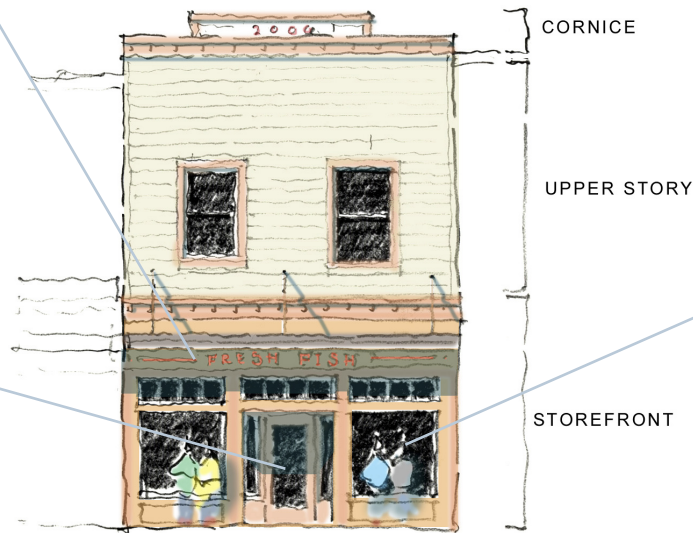
Pedestrian-scaled elements such as predictable rhythms, doors and windows that invite involvement, canopies or awnings that protect from the elements, lighting that provides a safe environment, planters, benches, and places to stop to support socializing.



Canopies, Awnings, and Signage



Inviting, Obvious Entry



Windows - Developing the Inside/Outside Connection

Evaluation of Wrangell's Streets



Strengthening Street Connection

- Large Windows—provide visibility into the store
- Windows provide indirect lighting to the front of the building
- Abrupt vehicle edge to building diminishes storefront appeal and pedestrian access



Strengthening Elements

- Storefront is apparent, needs further development
- Canopy or awning to protect entries and to provide pedestrian shelter
- Signage would help identify business



Strengthening Upper Story Consistency

- Upper story consistency to adjacent buildings would strengthen street edge
- Awning/Canopy material should be appropriate as an element.
- Tower element at corner creates architectural interest



Good Storefront Elements

- Strong Signage and canopy elements
- Obvious, inviting entry



Good Window Connection

- Good Inside/Outside connection
- Open, clear windows to show off retail



Modern Interpretation

- Contemporary materials used in a creative manner can be good

Working Storefront Examples



Contemporary Architecture: Using Modern Materials and Historic References



Strengthening Street Connection

Implementation

Much of the original Front Street storefront architecture still is part of the current downtown character. Existing buildings that have strong storefront characteristics should be maintained. The buildings that once shared storefront architecture should be renovated and brought back as close as possible to their original design. New building construction should be designed to maintain strong storefront characteristics.

By thinking of the architecture as a vital part of a street revitalization project, we think not just of what the streetscape can do, such as sidewalks, walkways, signage, and public spaces, we think of the edges of the streets that the storefronts define. In essence one can perceive the storefronts and walls as a community room that is shared by everyone.



Inside/ Outside

Implementation Elements

Private Business Study



Storefront Composition

- Balanced Composition
- Consistent Hierarchy
- Relationship between Elements

Exterior Material

- High Quality
- Convey Substance & Integrity

Entry Importance

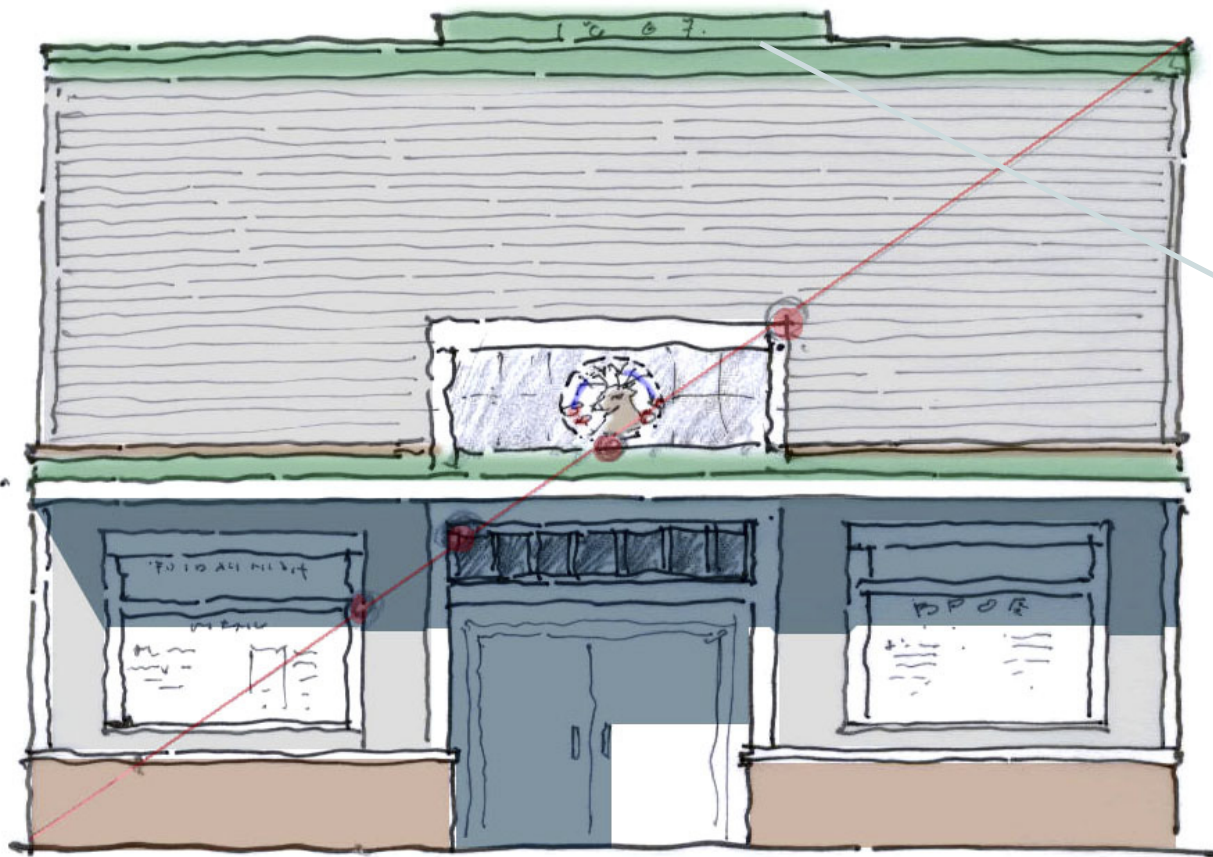
- Welcoming
- Identifiable
- Balanced with Façade Elements

Inside/Outside Interaction

- Large Windows
- Engages Public



Elks Club Façade Study



Consistent Cornice

Storefront Composition

- Balanced Composition
- Consistent Hierarchy
- Relationship between Elements

Inside/Outside Interaction

- Highlight Signage, Information Signage Part of Composition

Implementation Elements

Wrangell Sentinel Storefront



Storefront Composition

- Balanced Composition
- Strengthened Base Element
- Canopy Coverage
- Consistent Hierarchy

Exterior Material

- High Quality
- Convey Substance & Integrity

Strengthen Entry

- Welcoming
- Identifiable
- Balanced with Façade Elements

Inside/Outside Interaction

- Large Windows
- Engages Public

Recommendations

Streetscape Design

The installation of new sidewalks, crosswalks, reconfiguration of intersections, and meeting current accessibility guidelines will go a long way towards improving downtown Wrangell. Although functional in nature, they represent the bare minimum of what needs to be completed. In order to successfully achieve the revitalization of the downtown these functional improvements must be developed in an aesthetic manner. Doing so will create a pleasant environment to work, shop, and gather year-round for both residents and those that visit the community.

During the community workshops, it was apparent that the public wanted to find opportunities to develop its downtown in a manner that told the story of Wrangell, about its people, history, and culture. A wide range of themes were expressed, including the timber and fishing industry, Native culture and the nearby petroglyphs, the fact that Wrangell has been under rule by four countries and served as a British Fort, the local deposit of garnets, and the Stikine River, to name the most popular. Elements of these



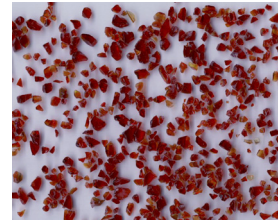
themes need to be woven into the streetscape design including site furnishings, paving, landscaping, and, where, site-appropriate, interpretive signs.

Sidewalks

The workshops explored several opportunities to incorporate these design themes into the streetscape design. Some of the ideas with the most potential included utilizing a variety of materials and patterns in the sidewalk paving design. The

use of colored concretes, colored concrete pavers, exposed aggregate paving, utilizing curved expansion and contraction joints, and incorporating colored glass chips or silicon

carbide granules can transform basic grey paving into something special. By utilizing curved expansion joints and either a colored concrete or exposed aggregate paving, the sidewalks could be transformed into the Stikine River with its meandering course running along Front Street. Dark-red-colored glass chips could be



floated into the grey concrete surfacing to replicate the appearance that the sidewalks are paved with crushed garnets. The concrete sidewalks could have the designs of the petroglyphs stamped into them at the intersections and provide a theme for each corner.

These concepts will add flair and

excitement to Front Street but will also be an additional cost to the overall project. It is likely that these sidewalk concepts would not be utilized for the entire length of Front Street but only in the downtown core, to be cost-effective. This will,

however, create a disjointed sidewalk design, and the downtown core and remaining stretch of Front Street needs to be unified by a design element. One such method would be to line both edges of the sidewalk along the entire length with colored concrete pavers. In the downtown core, the sidewalk would also have a “Garnet” or “River” design, while the remaining length of sidewalk would have a typical

concrete sidewalk edged with the colored pavers. This would be a cost-effective method to create a cohesive sidewalk design for the Front Street sidewalks.





Planters and Landscaping

The streetscape design calls for the inclusion of low height planters of 18" high or less at the intersections within the sidewalk bulb-outs. These bulb-outs create a widened sidewalk at the intersection, allowing for pedestrians to orient themselves at the intersections while limiting congestion of the sidewalks. These widened areas also allow for the placement of wayfinding signs, light poles, utility structures, interpretive signs, site furnishing (such as trash cans and benches), and also landscaping to be placed into the planters while not creating obstacles to pedestrians. Care must be taken to ensure that these elements do not create visual obstacles for vehicles traveling Front Street and reduce the ability to see other vehicles or pedestrians. Taller elements or objects such as trees that might be an obstacle must be placed at the intersection corner on the downward direction of travel. Work at the intersections needs to be coordinated with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to ensure visual safety at intersections.



Discussion at the public workshops indicated that the planters should be created out of a long-lasting material, and concrete would be the likely material. Again, concrete can be cold and drab, but the concrete could be dressed up by using exposed aggregate concrete. The walls of the planters could be constructed with exposed aggregate and have a wave shape to them, with a standard broom-finish top and cap placed on

the wall that could also serve as a seating wall. The shape of the planters should allow the placement of trash cans and benches to be incorporated into the overall design of the planter wall and not create an obstacle to pedestrian circulation. Additionally, duplicates of the petroglyphs could be stamped into some of the concrete walls during construction.

These stamps should be done sparingly to create a level of discovery and not necessarily occur on every planter wall or piece of concrete sidewalk.



Planters will be required to have adequate drainage, given the wet Southeast climate, and a minimum depth of 18" of planting soil in the beds. Low ground-cover plant material will be ideal to allow vehicles and pedestrians to see each other. Recommended ground material might include *Spiraea japonica* 'Magic Carpet', *Astilbe japonica*, and a wide range of native ferns and perennials which flower throughout the season and provide autumn color. All planters should be supplemented with a range of annuals to provide additional flowering interest. Street trees need to be selected that will provide minimal maintenance, be able to withstand the built environment, provide three seasons of interest, and have the necessary branching structure and clearance for pedestrians and vehicles along Front Street. Suggested species include *Tilia cordata* (Little leaf linden) and *Acer rubrum* (Red maple), to name a few. A primary species should be selected for the entire length of Front Street and supplemented with a secondary species at key locations such as park entrances, areas of interpretation, and other special areas along Front Street. These species could include *Malus* sp. (Crabapple), *Amelanchier* sp. (Serviceberry) or *Prunus* sp. (Cherry). In all cases, sufficient soil volumes must be provided for each tree, ranging from 6 to 10 cubic yards of planting soil per tree,

depending on the species selected. The design of the planting pits will need to be incorporated into the engineering of the project. Electrical outlets will also need to be provided at each tree planting location (but not mounted to the tree) to allow for holiday lighting of downtown.



Street Furnishings

The most basic level of street furnishings includes benches, trash cans, bicycle racks, lighting, and wayfinding signs. These need to be durable materials which can withstand the elements, vandalism, and heavy use. Metal furnishings typically meet these requirements but can be a little stale in their appearance. Metal wire mesh furniture dries quickly, is skateboard- and vandal-resistant, and has a clean, simple appearance. Several manufacturers make this style of furniture, including Landscape Forms and their Plexus line. Seating opportunities need to also be provided for those with disabilities and should include backrests and arm rests. Some areas should also be devoid of obstacles adjacent to sitting areas to accommodate wheelchairs and allow interaction by pedestrians. Trash cans need to be weather- and vandal-resistant and of course bear- and raven-proof. These typically have a lid system that needs to be ADA-compliant for those with limited mobility; one such manufacturer is Duncan's Haul-All, Inc., out of Whitehorse, Canada. Wayfinding signs need to be clear and concise and should be located at all gateways with maps and have directional indicators at intersections and



other destinations within the community. Two levels of wayfinding needs to be designed, one for pedestrians and one for vehicles. The signs and signposts should match the style and color of the other street furnishings, and this is also true for the bicycle racks. Lighting needs to be developed in the same manner as the wayfinding signs: one level for vehicles, and one for pedestrians. Simply installing lighting for vehicles creates unpleasant lighting for pedestrians and is out of scale for those using the sidewalk and public gathering areas. Lighting needs to be appropriate and safe but also not overwhelming. Installing two systems, or installing two types of lighting on a single pole, can be effective for both user groups. Lighting should also be selected that reflects the history of the community and its working heritage along the sea. Using fixtures with a simple hood that might have been found on the exterior of the old canneries would be appropriate. Several manufactures exist; one such light standard that would be appropriate is Cooper Lighting's Invue Epic Collection. Fixtures mounted on a simple non-ornamental pole with a color that matches the other street furnishings will create a



uniformed image for Front Street. Banners and/or hanging flower baskets can also be added to the light poles to add more excitement.

Artwork and Sculpture

Areas need to be set aside along Front Street to accommodate art work such as sculptures. Wrangell is a rich artist community, and the artwork should ultimately be created by local artists and schoolchildren. The community could hold competitions for the selection of the art and provide the funding for the work. Both permanent and temporary works should be considered to create interest and a variety of works to view. Where possible, murals should be commissioned for blank building walls that do not have a historic significance. Both the sculptures and murals should tell the many exciting stories of the community and the area. If the resources allow, competitions could also be held for the design of the benches instead of using off the shelf models. Each bench could be unique and also help convey what Wrangell is about. Creating unique conversation pieces along Front Street that are also functional will assist in making downtown Wrangell a destination for both residents and visitors to the community.



Next Steps

Cost

A similar street improvement project was recently completed in Juneau, on Seward Street, in 2005. This project involved complete reconstruction of the street including replacing all buried utilities (sewer, water, etc.), new base material, realigning curbs, and paving the road. Aesthetic elements of the project include colored concrete paver sidewalks, planters, fancy paver crosswalks, landscaping, signage, lighting, and site furniture. The total costs for the Seward Street project were around \$1,060 per linear foot. Specific site constraints and issues were a factor in that cost that Wrangell would not be subject to, but increases in material costs and Wrangell’s remoteness would probably make an estimate of \$1,000 per linear foot a reasonable initial estimate. Based on that number and the length of the streets in the project area, these are some initial estimated costs:

Front Street – 2,400’=	\$ 2,400,000.00
Shakes Street – 650’=	\$ 650,000.00
Lynch Street – 240’=	\$ 240,000.00
Total for improvements =	\$ 3,290,000.00

Options to manage costs of improvements include phasing improvements as funding becomes available or including elements that could make the project eligible for other funding sources. With the inclusion of interpretive features and elements, additional funds might be available through the Alaska Scenic Byway program.

Mid-Term and Long-Term Recommendations

Beyond the immediate actions to implement the Wrangell Downtown Revitalization Concept, there are additional recommendations to build upon this initial effort as future projects such as the development of the IFA terminal are realized.

Mid-Term Recommendations

Continue to bring in aesthetically appealing elements into downtown Wrangell

Once construction is complete, continue to explore use of banners, landscaping, benches, and lighting to improve the overall appeal of the downtown area.

Improve connector streets and sidewalks from Front Street to the Nolan Center and the waterfront

Downtown Wrangell is more than just Front Street. Examine ways to make all of downtown more pedestrian-friendly.

Develop interpretive program with wayfinding signage for Front Street and Shakes Street

Establish clear routes to help visitors circulate through downtown. Inform locals and visitors of Wrangell's past. Include information on elements such as the timber industry, the Old Mill site, Fort Dionysius, Church Street, Front Street, and the seafood industry.

Work to ensure business retention and business creation

A healthy and vibrant downtown depends on the health of the businesses located there. Develop a strategy to support Wrangell downtown businesses that includes the following elements:

- Set up on-on-one counseling sessions with business owners. Organizations such as the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Juneau Economic Development Council (JEDC) provide this service for free or at minimal rates. Consider flying in a business consultant for the initial service, with followups to occur by email and telephone.
- Develop a downtown management authority charged with overseeing and developing downtown revitalization.
- Create a comprehensive marketing campaign to attract residents and other consumers to downtown.
- Create a downtown directory.

Encourage private, owner-driven façade and architectural improvements

Once the proposed architectural guidelines are adopted, the City should encourage business owners to update their properties. Examine funding sources through organizations such as Small Cities CDBG or other appropriate community development assistance via the State of Alaska, to provide matching grants to property and business owners interested in improving their downtown building facades and business signs.

The designation of downtown as a historic district may improve grant opportunities. Historic Ketchikan Inc. offers free paint and technical assistance to private property owners. This nonprofit could serve as an excellent model for Wrangell.

Enforce building code compliance

Establish a system of building inspection that is enforced in a uniform and consistent fashion. Do not allow downtown buildings to fall out of compliance with downtown building codes. According to the HyettPalma study: “Allowing buildings to become unsafe, unsanitary, and unsightly – and allowing them to remain in that condition – will constitute an economic deterrent for downtown as a whole.”

Expand parking opportunities

Continue to explore ways to expand parking opportunities to suit the needs of local residents and business owners. Options could include incorporating parking and greenspace into all projects on publicly (city-) owned land, or property exchanges or purchasing of vacant lots for greenspace or off-street parking.

Long-Term Recommendations

Develop a Community Master Plan

In order to coordinate current and future planning and development efforts amongst the City of Wrangell, state and federal agencies, and private businesses, it is highly recommended that the City of Wrangell develop and implement a community master plan. This master plan will: allow and facilitate the coordination of the strategies, goals, and projects of various public agencies, prioritize project funding efforts, and provide support for project funding opportunities.

Develop interpretive program

Expand on Front Street wayfinding and signage to develop an interpretive route that reaches from downtown to Petroglyph beach, to the cemetery, to Old Wrangell, and to the rest of the island. Explore using monies from the scenic byway program to fund this program.

Improve shoreline access along waterfront

Create a mixed-use waterfront for all Wrangell residents. Maintain and enhance the waterfront and Zimovia Strait as a community amenity. Take advantage of unique working nature of Wrangell's waterfront. Create interpretive route that allows access and highlights Wrangell current life and economy. Include boat haul-out facilities, travel lift, seafood processing, etc. Create sitting, walking, and viewing areas.

Continue waterfront development

Complete waterfront fill project. Work with community members to develop a plan for Wrangell's waterfront that retains its economic value to the community while providing access to the wider community.

Incorporate expanding industry

Pay attention to local economic developments that may impact the downtown area. Assist expanding businesses in establishing new construction, freight delivery, community amenities, and traffic patterns that are consistent with the goals of the Wrangell's downtown revitalization project.

Track economic success of project

Periodically update the Wrangell Economic and Visitor Industry Analysis to determine the economic impact of the downtown revitalization improvements to Wrangell. Update and compare, at a minimum, the following indicators:

- Sales tax revenue
- Passenger statistics, including air, cruise, AMHS, and IFA
- Conference and meeting visitor statistics
- Yacht visits to Wrangell

Additionally, monitor resident attitudes about economic development, quality of life, and community goals through public forums, surveys, and other means.

Economic and Visitor Industry Analysis Summary

This is a summary of the Economic and Visitor Industry Analysis developed by the McDowell Group to support the Wrangell Downtown Revitalization Concept Plan. For the full report, please refer to the Appendices.

Historically, the Wrangell economy was centered on the fishing and timber industries. Currently, the City of Wrangell is working to diversify the local economy and stabilize employment. Recent improvements to the community include port enhancements and construction of a third harbor; the addition of Inter-Island Ferry service between Wrangell, Petersburg and Prince of Wales Island; and the recent completion of the Nolan Center, and a state-of-the-art convention center that also houses the Wrangell Visitor Center and the Wrangell Museum.

Wrangell is in a period of significant social and economic change. Several demographic and economic indicators reveal important trends in the community:

- The Wrangell population is down 11% from 2001 to 2005.
- Wrangell is aging at a faster rate than Alaska and the nation, and the proportion of young people in the population is declining. The 2005 median age in Wrangell was 43 years old, compared to the Alaska median age of 33 years. One in ten Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area residents were between the ages of 20 and 29 in 2005, compared to one in four in 1980.
- Local government accounts for 23% of Wrangell jobs. Federal government jobs, mostly with the Forest Service, account for an additional 20% of Wrangell employment.
- Gross earnings for Wrangell fishermen increased in 2004, despite a decline in pounds landed.
- Unemployment dropped to 10.1% in 2005 from 12.4% in 2004.
- Public school enrollment in Wrangell has declined 30% since 1999.
- Marine passenger traffic to Wrangell is decreasing. Cruise passengers are estimated to decrease 86% from 2005 to 2006, and another 17% from 2006 to 2007. Alaska Marine Highway System passenger traffic decreased by 7% from 2004 to 2005, corresponding with a system-wide decrease in passenger traffic of 7%.

- Air traffic to Wrangell had increased each year since 2002.
- Sales tax revenues increased in 2004 and 2005, but may decrease in 2006 due to a sharp decline in cruise ship passenger visitation.
- Housing costs are lower than the statewide average and are among the lowest in the state.

In order to successfully achieve Wrangell's economic goals of diversifying the local economy and stabilizing employment, Wrangell should consider the following action items:

- Stimulate consumer spending by increasing the appeal and usability of the downtown business district. This effort is already underway. Utilize short-term, mid-term, and long-term recommendations put forth in the Downtown Wrangell Revitalization plan.
- Create a community-wide plan to reduce space and logistical conflicts between user groups, such as the freight, cruise, yacht, and fishing industries.
- Support Chamber of Commerce efforts to stimulate retail business through marketing and events directed towards the Inter-island Ferry (IFA) travelers from Petersburg or Prince of Wales Island.
- Enhance infrastructure and seafood processing capacity by working with commercial fishermen and processors on expansion plans.
- Work cooperatively with transportation providers, such as AMHS, IFA, and Alaska Airlines, to encourage steady growth of passenger traffic.
- Market Wrangell as a regional and Statewide meeting destination. Increase number of visitor accommodations to allow for simplified convention planning and to expand appeal to mid-sized conferences.
- Support efforts of Wrangell Convention and Visitor Bureau to market Wrangell as a unique Alaska destination. Focus on independent, cruise, yacht, and convention travelers.
- Look for ways to increase private sector business opportunities while maintaining or growing current level of State, Federal, and local government positions.
- Take advantage of low housing costs and workforce availability, along with outstanding natural resource opportunities, to encourage new investments of outside businesses into the community.

Final Overview

Improve Front Street as a “community room”

Enhance downtown character

Organize pedestrian and vehicle use of space

Extend and improve sidewalks for pedestrian safety and comfort

Improve connectivity across and to Front Street

Create a year-round pedestrian-friendly special use area

This Revitalization Vision Concept is the first phase of an ongoing process. Recommendations will be evaluated and revised as necessary in the next phase to develop buildable plans based on the vision concept.



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